

February 2006

Examples of Government Waste

Federally Funded Flying Fish

Congress appropriated \$10 million in FY03 for the Alaska Fisheries Marketing Board (AFMB), a non-profit organization, which since its inception has received \$30 million in federal funding. Out of its federal funds, the AFMB gave Alaska Airlines a \$500,000 grant to paint a Boeing 737 to look like a Chinook salmon. According to news reports, the plane is designed to promote wild Alaskan seafood, as well as to highlight Alaska Airline's contribution in transporting seafood out of the state. (Source: <http://www.house.gov/pence/rsc/doc/flyingfish.doc>)

Homeland Goes Hollywood

In October 2004, the Department of Homeland Security hired former actress Bobbie Faye Furgeson, as DHS' Hollywood Liaison. In March 2004, DHS posted the opening for a "liaison to the entertainment industry," stating the salary could top \$136,000, plus benefits. (Source: <http://www.house.gov/pence/rsc/doc/Homeland%20Goes%20Hollywood--May%202005.pdf>)

FEMA/Taxpayer-Funded \$800 Louis Vuitton Handbags for Katrina Evacuees

As part of their Katrina relief efforts, FEMA distributed \$2,000 debit cards to many of the hurricane victims. However, as a recent *New York Daily News* article outlines, two Katrina evacuees will now be able to carry around their government debit cards in a brand new, \$800 Louis Vuitton handbag. (Source: <http://www.house.gov/pence/rsc/doc/Vuitton.doc>)

Milk Matters and Bo Vine the Spokescow

Milk Matters is a campaign coordinated by NIH's Institute of Child Health and Human Development, which features "Bo Vine the Spokescow" who encourages children to drink milk. The campaign website, which costs approximately \$175,000 per year to operate, contains games and activities, and offers free coloring books to children. The Institute's mission includes studying childhood diseases such as, Spina bifida, Down syndrome, and Autism (Source: <http://www.house.gov/pence/rsc/doc/spokescow.pdf>)

Government-Sponsored Anger Management Classes

Following September 11, 2001, Northern Virginia received \$13.4 million in FEMA funds, which they were used to pay for gardens and "healing spaces", peace and anger management workshops, and other therapeutic activities for post-9-11 mental health. (Source: <http://www.house.gov/pence/rsc/doc/FEMA%20dollars%20at%20work.doc>)

NEA's Beer Can House

The National Endowment for the Arts, which received over \$120 million in FY06, awarded \$10,000 to the Orange Show Foundation in Huston, Texas, to restore the Beer Can House, a structure lined with beer cans, intended to house future artists-in-residence.

(Source: http://www.house.gov/pence/rsc/doc/070104_NEA_Funding_Beercanhouse.pdf)

PBS and Playboy

The Public Broadcasting Service, (PBS), mixed taxpayer dollars with funding from the Playboy Foundation when they accepted a donation from the Foundation to help pay for a movie which they recently aired entitled “The Education of Shelby Knox.” The movie detailed the life of Shelby Knox, who had personally pledged abstinence until marriage, but becomes an advocate for teaching teens about contraception and condom use through sex education. As part of her advocacy, Shelby allies herself with a group of gay students who have been denied the right to form a gay-straight alliance in school. (Source: <http://www.house.gov/pence/rsc/doc/PBS--Playboy.pdf>)

Ozzy Osbourne Concert Tickets Complements of the Taxpayer

According to a U.S Department of Agriculture Office of the Inspector General the report, USDA employees have significantly abused the use of their government credit cards, which are intended to be used for purchases while on government travel. With the credit cards, employees purchased items such as Ozzy Osbourne concert tickets, an automobile, and tattoos, all paid for on taxpayer credit. (Source: <http://www.house.gov/pence/rsc/doc/Ozzy.pdf>)

VERB!

VERB! is a national, social marketing campaign coordinated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control. Although the President’s Budget has repeatedly called for the termination of this program, VERB! has received \$335 million in federal funds since its inception in 2001. According to its website, VERB! aims to make physical activity “cool and fun for tweens” (youth ages 9-13) Congress finally defunded the program in FY06. (Source: http://www.house.gov/pence/rsc/doc/020106_VERB_1Pager.doc)

NASA Performance Artist

At a cost to the taxpayers of \$20,000, for two years, NASA paid Laurie Anderson as the agency’s “artist in residence.” The performing artist was tasked with creating and performing a theatrical story-telling piece in theaters across the nation and producing a film about the moons of the solar system. In a June 2004, *Washington Post* interview, Anderson stated, “Congress is the jocks and they’re always saying how terrible it is that NASA spends their money on all this stuff.” (Source: http://www.house.gov/pence/rsc/doc/091505_nasa_artist.doc)

Congressional Record Printing

The Government Printing Office prints 6,000 Congressional Records every day that Congress is in session, at a cost of \$22.2 million each year. By reducing the number of copies printed daily to even 3,000, we would save the taxpayers \$3.2 million annually.

(Source: http://www.house.gov/pence/rsc/doc/congressional_record.pdf)

Energy Hog

The Department of Energy spent approximately \$325,000 to operate the “Energy Hog” Webgame for Kids. The website contains games designed to teach children ages eight to 13 about energy efficiency. (Source:

http://www.house.gov/pence/rsc/doc/020106_Energy_Hog_1pager.doc)

NIH Grants for Sexual Research Projects

The National Institutes of Health has given grants to researchers conducting sexual research projects, including studies of the sexual habits of older men, college student’s reactions to pornography, of San Francisco’s Asian prostitutes and masseuses, of American Indian transgendered people, and of Chinese pandas.

(Source: <http://www.house.gov/pence/rsc/doc/NIHgrants.pdf>)

Medicaid Waste

Medicaid needs much improvement in the area of waste, fraud, and abuse. According to 2001 GAO report on Medicaid, “The magnitude of improper payments throughout Medicaid is unknown.” Additionally, the government loses millions of dollars annually due to fraud.

(Source: <http://www.house.gov/pence/rsc/doc/MedicaidWaste.pdf>)

Food Stamp Program

Like Medicaid, the Food Stamp Program is riddled with payment errors, recipient fraud and abuse, and inefficiency. According to a May 2005, OMB report, in 2003, the food stamp program spent \$1.1 billion in “overpayments” to program beneficiaries. This is money that is not refunded to the government and is counted as a program loss on the budget books. (Source:

<http://www.house.gov/pence/rsc/doc/FoodStampWaste.pdf>)drer